

H.484

Introduced by Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry

Date:

Subject: Agriculture; fertilizer; beneficial substances; miscellaneous subjects

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to amend the State statutes on the use of plant amendments, plant biostimulants, and soil amendments to be consistent with the uniform standards for regulation of beneficial substances. The bill would define “beneficial substances” to mean any substance or compound, other than primary, secondary, and micro plant nutrients (fertilizers), and excluding pesticides, that can be demonstrated by scientific research to be beneficial to one or more species of plants, soil, or media.

An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

~~Sec. 1. 6 V.S.A. chapter 28 is amended to read:~~

~~CHAPTER 28. FERTILIZER AND, LIME, AND BENEFICIAL  
SUBSTANCES~~

~~§ 501. TITLE~~

1     ~~This chapter shall be known as the “Fertilizer, Lime, Plant Amendment,~~  
2     ~~Plant Biostimulant, and Soil Amendment and Beneficial Substances Law.”~~

3     § 362. ENFORCING OFFICIAL

4         This chapter shall be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food  
5     and Markets or designee, hereafter referred to as the Secretary.

6     § 363. DEFINITIONS

7         As used in this chapter:

8             (1) “Agricultural lime” or “agricultural liming material” or “lime”  
9     means one or more of the following:

10             (A) All products with calcium and magnesium compounds that are  
11     capable of neutralizing soil acidity and that are intended, sold, or offered for  
12     sale for agricultural or plant propagation purposes.

13             (B) Limestone consisting essentially of calcium carbonate or a  
14     combination of calcium carbonate with magnesium carbonate capable of  
15     neutralizing soil acidity.

16             (C) Industrial waste or industrial by-products that contain calcium;  
17     calcium and magnesium; or calcium, magnesium, and potassium in forms that  
18     are capable of neutralizing soil acidity and that are intended, sold, or offered  
19     for sale for agricultural purposes. For the purposes of this chapter, the terms  
20     “agricultural lime,” “lime,” and “agricultural liming material” shall have the  
21     same meaning.

1 ~~(2) “Beneficial substance” means any substance or compound, other~~  
2 ~~than primary, secondary, and micro plant nutrients (fertilizers), and excluding~~  
3 ~~pesticides, that can be demonstrated by scientific research to be beneficial to~~  
4 ~~one or more species of plants, soil, or media. Beneficial substances include~~  
5 ~~plant amendments, plant biostimulants, plant inoculants, soil amendments, soil~~  
6 ~~inoculants, and other chemical or biological substances beneficial to plants or~~  
7 ~~their growing environment.~~

8 (3) “Brand” means a term, design, or trademark used in connection with  
9 one or more grades or formulas of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant~~  
10 ~~biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime.

11 (3)(4) “Distribute” means to import, consign, manufacture, produce,  
12 compound, mix, blend, offer for sale, sell, barter, or supply a fertilizer, ~~a plant~~  
13 ~~amendment, a plant biostimulant, a soil amendment~~ a beneficial substance, or  
14 lime in this State through any means, including sales outlets, catalogues, the  
15 telephone, the internet, or any electronic means.

16 (4)(5) “Distributor” means any person who distributes fertilizer, ~~plant~~  
17 ~~amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendments~~ beneficial substance, or lime.

18 (5)(6) “Exceptional quality biosolid” means a product derived in whole  
19 or in part from domestic wastes that have been subjected to and meet the  
20 ~~requirements of the following.~~

1 ~~(A) a pathogen reduction process established in 40 C.F.R.~~

2 ~~§ 503.32(a)(3), (4), (7), or (8);~~

3 ~~(B) one of the vector attraction reduction standards established in 40~~  
4 ~~C.F.R. § 503.33;~~

5 ~~(C) the contaminant concentration limits in Vermont Solid Waste~~  
6 ~~Rules § 6-1303(a)(1); and~~

7 ~~(D) if derived from a composting process, Vermont Solid Waste~~  
8 ~~Rules § 6-1303(a)(5).~~

9 ~~(6)(7) “Fertilizer” means any substance containing one or more~~  
10 ~~recognized plant nutrients that is used for its plant nutrient content and that is~~  
11 ~~designed for use or claimed to have value in promoting plant growth or health,~~  
12 ~~except unprocessed animal or vegetable manures and other products exempted~~  
13 ~~by the Secretary.~~

14 ~~(A) A fertilizer material is a substance that either:~~

15 ~~(i) contains important quantities of at least one of the primary~~  
16 ~~plant nutrients: nitrogen, phosphorus, or potassium;~~

17 ~~(ii) has 85 percent or more of its plant nutrient content present in~~  
18 ~~the form of a single chemical compound; or~~

19 ~~(iii) is derived from a plant or chemical residue or by-product or~~  
20 ~~natural material deposit that has been processed in such a way that its content~~

1 ~~of plant nutrients has not been materially changed except by purification and~~  
2 concentration.

3 (B) A mixed fertilizer is a fertilizer containing any combination or  
4 mixture of fertilizer materials.

5 (C) A specialty fertilizer is a fertilizer distributed for nonfarm use.

6 (D) A bulk fertilizer is a fertilizer distributed in a nonpackaged form.

7 ~~(7)~~(8) "Formulation" means a material or mixture of materials prepared  
8 according to a particular formula.

9 ~~(8)~~(9) "Grade" means the percentage of total nitrogen, available  
10 phosphorus or phosphoric acid, and soluble potassium or potash stated in  
11 whole numbers in the same terms, order, or percentages as in the guaranteed  
12 analysis. Specialty fertilizers and fertilizer materials may be guaranteed in  
13 fractional terms. Any grade expressed in fractional terms that is not preceded  
14 by a whole number shall be preceded by zero.

15 ~~(9)~~(10) "Guaranteed analysis" means:

16 (A) in reference to fertilizer, the minimum percentages of plant  
17 nutrients claimed by the manufacturer or producer of the product in the  
18 following order and form: nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash; and

19 (B) in reference to agricultural lime or agricultural liming material,  
20 ~~the minimum percentages of calcium oxide and magnesium oxide or calcium~~

1 ~~carbonate and the calcium carbonate equivalent, or both, as claimed by the~~  
2 manufacturer or producer of the product.

3 ~~(10)(11)~~ “Label” means the display of all written, printed, or graphic  
4 matter upon the immediate container or a statement accompanying a fertilizer,  
5 ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or  
6 lime.

7 ~~(11)(12)~~ “Labeling” means all written, printed, or graphic material upon  
8 or accompanying any fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil~~  
9 ~~amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime, including advertisements, brochures,  
10 posters, and television and radio announcements used in promoting the sale of  
11 the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial  
12 substance, or lime.

13 ~~(12)(13)~~ “Official sample” means any sample of fertilizer, ~~plant~~  
14 ~~amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime  
15 taken by the Secretary.

16 ~~(13)(14)~~ “Plant amendment” means any substance applied to plants or  
17 seeds that is intended to improve growth, yield, product quality, reproduction,  
18 flavor, or other favorable characteristics of plants, except for fertilizer, soil  
19 amendments, agricultural liming materials, animal and vegetable manures,  
20 pesticides, plant regulators, and other materials exempted by rule adopted  
21 ~~under this chapter.~~

1 ~~(14)(15) “Plant biostimulant” means a substance or microorganism, or~~  
2 ~~mixtures thereof that, when applied to seeds, plants, or the rhizosphere,~~  
3 ~~stimulates soil, or other growth media act to support a plant’s natural nutrition~~  
4 ~~processes to enhance or benefit nutrient uptake, nutrient efficiency, tolerance~~  
5 ~~to abiotic stress, or crop quality and yield, except for fertilizers, soil~~  
6 ~~amendments, plant amendments, or pesticides independently of the~~  
7 ~~biostimulant’s nutrient content. The plant biostimulant thereby improves~~  
8 ~~nutrient availability, uptake, or use efficiency; tolerance to abiotic stress; and~~  
9 ~~consequent growth development, quality, or yield. The Secretary may modify~~  
10 ~~the definition of “plant biostimulant” by rule or procedure in order to maintain~~  
11 ~~consistency with U.S. Department of Agriculture requirements.~~

12 (16) “Plant inoculant” means a product consisting of microorganisms to  
13 be applied to the plant or soil for the purpose of enhancing the availability or  
14 uptake of plant nutrients through the root system.

15 ~~(15)(17) “Percent” or “percentage” means the percentage by weight.~~

16 ~~(16)(18) “Primary nutrient” includes nitrogen, available phosphoric acid~~  
17 ~~or phosphorus, and soluble potash or potassium.~~

18 ~~(17)(19) “Product” means the name of the fertilizer, plant amendment,~~  
19 ~~plant biostimulant, soil amendment beneficial substance, or lime that identifies~~  
20 ~~it as to kind, class, or specific use.~~

1 ~~(18)(20) “Registrant” means the person who registers a fertilizer, plant~~  
2 ~~amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime  
3 under the provisions of this chapter.

4 ~~(19)(21) “Soil amendment” means a substance or mixture of substance~~  
5 ~~that is intended to improve the physical, chemical, biochemical, biological, or~~  
6 ~~other characteristics of the soil or a distinct form of horticultural growing~~  
7 ~~media used in lieu of soil. “Soil amendment” does not mean fertilizers,~~  
8 ~~agricultural liming materials, unprocessed animal manures, unprocessed~~  
9 ~~vegetable manures, pesticides, plant biostimulants, and other materials~~  
10 ~~exempted by rule. A compost product from a facility under the jurisdiction of~~  
11 ~~the Agency of Natural Resources’ Solid Waste Management Rules or~~  
12 ~~exceptional quality biosolids shall not be regulated as a soil amendment under~~  
13 ~~this chapter, unless marketed and distributed for the use in the production of an~~  
14 ~~agricultural commodity.~~

15 ~~(22) “Soil inoculant” means a microbial product that is applied to~~  
16 ~~colonize the soil to benefit the soil chemistry, biology, or structure.~~

17 ~~(20)(23) “Ton” means a net weight of 2,000 pounds avoirdupois.~~

18 ~~(21)(24) “Use” includes all purposes for which a fertilizer, plant~~  
19 ~~amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime  
20 ~~is applied.~~



1 ~~(22)(25) "Weight" means the weight of undried material as offered for~~  
2 ~~sale.~~

3 § 364. REGISTRATION

4 (a) Each brand or grade or formula of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant~~  
5 ~~biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial substance shall be registered in the  
6 name of the person whose name appears upon the label before being  
7 distributed in this State. The application for registration shall be submitted to  
8 the Secretary on a form furnished by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and  
9 Markets and shall be accompanied by a fee of \$85.00 per grade or formulation  
10 registered. Upon approval by the Secretary, a copy of the registration shall be  
11 furnished to the applicant. All registrations expire on December 31 of each  
12 year. The application shall include the following information:

- 13 (1) the brand and grade or formulation;  
14 (2) the guaranteed analysis if applicable; and  
15 (3) the name and address of the registrant.

16 (b) A distributor shall not be required to register any fertilizer, ~~plant~~  
17 ~~amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ or beneficial substance that  
18 is already registered under this chapter by another person, provided there is no  
19 change in the label for the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or~~  
20 ~~soil amendment or beneficial substance.~~

1 ~~(c) Each beneficial substance brand shall refer to a specific formulation.~~  
2 Different brands may refer to the same specific formulation. Products for  
3 which formulations change, such as changes in the "Contains Beneficial  
4 Substances" analysis, statement of composition, or anything that implies a  
5 different product, must obtain a new registration with a brand that  
6 distinguishes it from the previous formulation.

7 (d) A distributor shall not be required to register each grade of fertilizer  
8 formulated or each formulation of soil amendment according to specifications  
9 that are furnished by a consumer prior to mixing but shall be required to label  
10 the fertilizer or soil amendment as provided in subsection 365(b) of this title.

11 ~~(d)~~(e) The Secretary may request additional proof of testing of products  
12 prior to registration for guaranteed analyses or adulterants.

13 ~~(e)~~(f) Each separately identified agricultural lime product shall be  
14 registered before being distributed in this State. Registration shall be  
15 performed in the same manner as fertilizer registration except that each  
16 application shall be accompanied by a fee of \$50.00 per product.

17 ~~(f)~~(g) The registration and tonnage fees, along with any deficiency  
18 penalties collected pursuant to sections 331 and 372 of this title, shall be  
19 deposited in a special fund. Funds deposited in this fund shall be restricted to  
20 implementing and administering the provisions of this title and any other  
21 ~~provisions of law relating to feeds and seeds.~~

§ 265. LABELS

(a)(1) Any fertilizer or agricultural lime distributed in this State in containers shall have placed on or affixed to the container a label setting forth in clearly legible and conspicuous form the following information:

(A) net weight;

(B) brand and grade, provided that grade shall not be required when no primary nutrients are claimed;

(C) guaranteed analysis; and

(D) name and address of the registrant.

(2) For bulk shipments, this information in written or printed form shall accompany delivery and be supplied to the purchaser at the time of delivery.

(b) A fertilizer or lime formulated according to specifications furnished by a consumer prior to mixing shall be labeled to show the net weight, the guaranteed analysis or name, analysis and weight of each ingredient used in the mixture, and the name and address of the distributor and purchaser.

(c) If the Secretary finds that a requirement for expressing calcium and magnesium in elemental form would not impose an economic hardship on distributors and users of agricultural liming materials by reason of conflicting label requirements among states, the Secretary may require by rule that the minimum percent of calcium oxide and magnesium oxide or calcium carbonate and magnesium carbonate, or both, shall be expressed in the following terms.

1       Total Calcium (Ca) ..... percent

2       Total Magnesium (Mg) ..... percent

3       (d)(1) Any plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment

4       beneficial substance distributed in this State in containers shall have placed on

5       or affixed to the container a label setting forth in clearly legible and

6       conspicuous form the following information:

7               (A) net weight or volume;

8               (B) brand name;

9               (C) purpose statement identifying the purpose of the product;

10              (D) directions for application or use;

11              (E) guaranteed analysis; and

12              (F) name and address of the registrant; and

13              (F) a statement of composition showing the amount of each

14       ingredient, which is the agent in a product primarily responsible for the

15       intended effects using the following format:

16               CONTAINS BENEFICIAL SUBSTANCE(S)

17               Name of beneficial substance ..... % (or acceptable

18       units)

19               Genus and species of microorganism ..... % viable CFU/cm<sup>3</sup>, /ml,

20       /g, or other acceptable units

1 ~~(Identify and list all beneficial substances. Substances shall include~~  
2 ingredient source, if applicable. Ex. "humic acid from leonardite or saponin  
3 from Yucca schidigera").

4 (2) For products that claim microorganisms, labels shall also include:

5 (A) the expiration date for use; and

6 (B) storage conditions.

7 ~~(2)(3)~~ For bulk shipments of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant~~  
8 ~~biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substances, or lime, the information  
9 required under this subsection shall accompany delivery in written or printed  
10 form and shall be supplied to the purchaser at the time of delivery.

11 (4) Efficacy data may be required to support beneficial substance  
12 ingredient claims if the ingredient is not presently defined by the Association  
13 of American Plant Food Control Officials' Official Publication for the  
14 particular claim.

15 ~~(3)(5)~~ Under a rule adopted under this subsection, an affected person  
16 shall be given a reasonable time to come into compliance.

17 § 366. TONNAGE FEES

18 (a) A person distributing fertilizer to a nonregistrant consumer in the State  
19 annually shall pay the following fees to the Secretary:

20 (1) a \$150.00 minimum tonnage fee;

21 ~~(2) \$0.50 per ton of agricultural fertilizer distributed, and~~

1       ~~(2) \$30.00 per ton of nonagricultural fertilizer distributed~~

2       (b) Persons distributing fertilizer shall report annually on or before January

3       15 for the previous year ending December 31 to the Secretary revealing the

4       amounts of each grade of fertilizer and the form in which the fertilizer was

5       distributed within this State. Each report shall be accompanied with payment

6       and written permission allowing the Secretary to examine the person's books

7       for the purpose of verifying tonnage reports.

8       (c) No information concerning tonnage sales furnished to the Secretary

9       under this section shall be disclosed in such a way as to divulge the details of

10      the business operation to any person unless it is necessary for the enforcement

11      of the provisions of this chapter.

12      (d) Persons distributing a ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil~~

13      ~~amendment~~ beneficial substance in the State shall report annually on or before

14      January 15 for the previous year ending December 31 to the Secretary

15      revealing the amounts of each formulation of ~~plant amendment, plant~~

16      ~~biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial substance and the form in which

17      the ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial

18      substance was distributed within this State. Each report shall include a written

19      authorization allowing the Secretary to examine the person's books for the

20      purpose of verifying tonnage reports. ~~Plant amendments, plant biostimulants,~~

21      ~~and soil amendments are~~ A beneficial substance is exempt from tonnage fees.

1 ~~(e) Agricultural limes, including agricultural lime mixed with wood ash,~~  
2 are exempt from the tonnage fees required in this section.

3 (f) Lime and wood ash mixtures may be registered as agricultural liming  
4 materials and guaranteed for potassium or potash, provided that the wood ash  
5 totals less than 50 percent of the mixture.

6 (g)(1) All fees collected under subdivisions (a)(1) and (2) of this section  
7 shall be deposited in the special fund created by subsection 364(f) of this title  
8 and used in accordance with its provisions.

9 (2) All fees collected under subdivision (a)(3) of this section shall be  
10 deposited in the Agricultural Water Quality Special Fund created under section  
11 4803 of this title.

12 (h) [Repealed.]

13 § 367. INSPECTION; SAMPLING; ANALYSIS

14 For the purpose of enforcing this chapter and determining whether or not  
15 fertilizers, plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendments beneficial  
16 substances, and lime distributed in this State endanger the health and safety of  
17 Vermont citizens, the Secretary upon presenting appropriate credentials is  
18 authorized:

19 (1) To enter any public or private premises except domiciles during  
20 ~~regular business hours and stop and enter any vehicle being used to transport~~

1 ~~or held fertilizer, a plant amendment, a plant biostimulant, a soil amendment~~  
2 beneficial substances, or lime.

3 (2) To inspect blending plants, warehouses, establishments, vehicles,  
4 equipment, finished or unfinished materials, containers, labeling, and records  
5 relating to distribution, storage, or use.

6 (3) To sample and analyze any fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant~~  
7 ~~biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime. The methods of  
8 sampling and analysis shall be those adopted by the Association of Official  
9 Analytical Chemists. In cases not covered by this method or in cases where  
10 methods are available in which improved applicability has been demonstrated,  
11 the Secretary may authorize and adopt methods that reflect sound analytical  
12 procedures.

13 (4) To develop any reasonable means necessary to monitor and adopt  
14 rules for the use of fertilizers, ~~plant amendments, plant biostimulants, soil~~  
15 ~~amendments~~ beneficial substances, and lime on Vermont soils where  
16 monitoring indicates environmental or health problems. In addition, the  
17 Secretary may develop and adopt rules for the proper storage of fertilizers,  
18 ~~plant amendments, plant biostimulants, soil amendments~~ beneficial substances,  
19 ~~and lime held for distribution or sale.~~



§ 368. MISBRANDING

(a) No person shall distribute a misbranded fertilizer, ~~plant amendment,~~  
~~plant biostimulant,~~ soil amendment beneficial substance, or agricultural lime.

A fertilizer, ~~plant amendment,~~ ~~plant biostimulant,~~ or ~~soil amendment~~  
beneficial substance shall be deemed to be misbranded if the Secretary  
determines one or more of the following:

(1) The labeling is false or misleading in any particular.

(2) It is distributed under the name of another fertilizer product, ~~plant~~  
~~amendment,~~ ~~plant biostimulant,~~ or ~~soil amendment~~ beneficial substance.

(3) It contains unsubstantiated claims.

(4) It is not labeled as required in section 365 of this title and in  
accordance with rules adopted under this chapter.

(5) It is labeled, or represented, to contain a plant nutrient that does not  
conform to the standard of identity established by rule. In adopting rules  
under this chapter, the Secretary shall ~~give consideration to~~ consider  
definitions recommended by the Association of American Plant Food Control  
Officials.

(b) An agricultural lime shall be deemed to be misbranded if:

(1) its labeling is false or misleading in any particular; or

(2) it is not labeled as required by section 365 of this title and in  
accordance with rules adopted under this chapter.

§ 269. ADULTERATION

No person shall distribute an adulterated lime, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or fertilizer product. A fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime shall be deemed to be adulterated if:

(1) it contains any deleterious or harmful ingredient in an amount sufficient to render it injurious to beneficial plant life, animals, humans, aquatic life, soil, or water when applied in accordance with directions for use on the label, or if uses of the product may result in contamination or condemnation of a raw agricultural commodity by use, or if adequate warning statements or directions for use that may be necessary to protect plant life, animals, humans, aquatic life, soil, or water are not shown on the label;

(2) its composition falls below or differs from that which it is purported to possess by its labeling;

(3) it contains crop seed or weed seed; or

(4) it contains heavy metals, radioactive substances, or synthetic organics in amounts sufficient to render it injurious to livestock or human health when applied in accordance with directions for use on the label, or if adequate warning statements or directions for use that may be necessary to protect livestock or human health are not shown on the label.

~~§ 370. PUBLICATION, CONSUMER INFORMATION REGARDING USE~~

~~ON NONAGRICULTURAL TURF OF FERTILIZER, PLANT~~

~~AMENDMENTS, PLANT BIOSTIMULANTS, AND SOIL~~

~~AMENDMENTS BENEFICIAL SUBSTANCES~~

(a) The Secretary shall publish on an annual basis:

(1) information concerning the distribution of fertilizers, plant  
amendments, plant biostimulants, soil amendments beneficial substances, and  
limes; and

(2) results of analyses based on official samples of fertilizers, plant  
amendments, plant biostimulants, soil amendments beneficial substances, and  
lime distributed within the State as compared with guaranteed analyses  
required pursuant to the terms of this chapter.

(b)(1) The Secretary, in consultation with the University of Vermont  
Extension, fertilizer industry representatives, lake groups, and other interested  
or affected parties, shall produce information for distribution to the general  
public with respect to the following:

(A) problems faced by the waters of the State because of discharges  
of phosphorus;

(B) an explanation of the extent to which phosphorus exists naturally  
in the soil,

(a) If any fertilizer, plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment, beneficial substance, or agricultural lining material is found to be short in net

1 ~~weight, the registrant of the fertilizer, plant amendment, plant biostimulant,~~  
2 ~~soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime shall pay a penalty of three times  
3 the value of the actual shortage to the affected party.

4 (b) Each registrant shall be offered an opportunity for a hearing before the  
5 Secretary. Penalty payments shall be made within 30 days after notice of the  
6 Secretary's decision to assess a penalty. Proof of payment to the consumer  
7 shall be promptly forwarded to the Secretary by the registrant.

8 (c) If the consumer cannot be found, the amount of the penalty payments  
9 shall be paid to the Secretary who shall deposit the payment into the revolving  
10 account established by subsection 364(1) of this title.

11 (d) This section is not an exclusive cause of action, and persons affected  
12 may utilize any other right of action available under law.

13 § 375. CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION

14 The Secretary is authorized to cancel or suspend the registration of any  
15 fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial  
16 substance, or lime or refuse a registration application if the provisions of this  
17 chapter or the rules adopted under this chapter have been violated, provided  
18 that no registration shall be revoked or refused without a hearing before the  
19 Secretary.

~~§ 276. DETAINED FERTILIZER, BENEFICIAL SUBSTANCE, AND LIME~~

(a) Withdrawal from distribution orders. When the Secretary has reasonable cause to believe any lot of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime is being distributed in violation of any of the provisions of this chapter or any of the rules under this chapter, the Secretary may issue and enforce a written or printed “withdrawal from distribution” order, warning the distributor not to dispose of the lot of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime in any manner until written permission is given by the Secretary or the court. The Secretary shall release the lot of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime withdrawn when this chapter and rules have been complied with. If compliance is not obtained within 30 days, the Secretary may begin, or upon request of the distributor or registrant shall begin, proceedings for condemnation.

(b) Condemnation and confiscation. Any lot of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime not in compliance with this chapter and rules shall be subject to seizure on complaint of the Secretary to a court of competent jurisdiction in the area in which the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime is located. In the event the court finds the

1 ~~fertilizer, plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial  
2 substance, or lime to be in violation of this chapter and orders the  
3 condemnation of the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil~~  
4 ~~amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime, it shall be disposed of in any manner  
5 consistent with the quality of the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant~~  
6 ~~biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime and the laws of the  
7 State, provided that in no instance shall disposition of the fertilizer, ~~plant~~  
8 ~~amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime  
9 be ordered by the court without first giving the claimant an opportunity to  
10 apply to the court for release of the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant~~  
11 ~~biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime or for permission  
12 to process or relabel the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil~~  
13 ~~amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime to bring it into compliance with this  
14 chapter.

15 \* \* \*

16 § 379. EXCHANGES BETWEEN MANUFACTURERS

17 Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to restrict or impact sales or  
18 exchanges of fertilizers, ~~plant amendments, plant biostimulants, or soil~~  
19 ~~amendments~~ or beneficial substances to each other by importers,  
20 manufacturers, or manipulators who mix fertilizer materials, ~~plant~~  
21 ~~amendments, plant biostimulants, or soil amendments~~ or beneficial substances

1 ~~for sale or to prevent the free and unrestricted shipments of fertilizer, plant~~  
2 ~~amendments, plant biostimulant, or soil amendments or beneficial substances~~  
3 to manufacturers or manipulators who have registered their brands as required  
4 by provisions of this chapter.

5 § 380. ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY

6 Consistent with chapter 1 of this title, the Secretary may assess an  
7 administrative penalty upon determining that a person has violated a rule  
8 issued under this chapter or has violated this chapter in the following manner:

9 (1) distributed a specialty fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant~~  
10 ~~biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime without first  
11 obtaining the appropriate product registration;

12 (2) distributed a fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil~~  
13 ~~amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime without appropriate and accurate  
14 labeling, including when a beneficial substance label does not reflect its  
15 composition;

16 (3) distributed any adulterated fertilizer, beneficial substance, or lime;

17 (4) failed to disclose on the label sources of potentially deleterious  
18 components;

19 (3)(5) failed to report or to accurately report the amount and form of  
20 ~~each grade of fertilizer distributed in Vermont on an annual basis,~~



1 ~~(4)(6) failed to report or to accurately report the amount and form of~~  
2 each formulation of plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment  
3 beneficial substance;

4 ~~(5)(7) failed to pay the appropriate tonnage fee; or~~

5 ~~(6)(8) violated a cease and desist order.~~

6 \* \* \*

7 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

8 ~~This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.~~

\* \* \* *Beneficial Substances* \* \* \*

*Sec. 1. 6 V.S.A. chapter 28 is amended to read:*

*CHAPTER 28. FERTILIZER AND, LIME, AND BENEFICIAL SUBSTANCES*

*§ 361. TITLE*

*This chapter shall be known as the “Fertilizer, Lime, ~~Plant Amendment,~~*  
*~~Plant Biostimulant, and Soil Amendment~~ and Beneficial Substances Law.”*

*§ 362. ENFORCING OFFICIAL*

*This chapter shall be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food*  
*and Markets or designee, hereafter referred to as the Secretary.*

*§ 363. DEFINITIONS*

*As used in this chapter:*

*(1) “Agricultural lime” or “agricultural liming material” or “lime”*  
*means one or more of the following:*

*(A) All products with calcium and magnesium compounds that are capable of neutralizing soil acidity and that are intended, sold, or offered for sale for agricultural or plant propagation purposes.*

*(B) Limestone consisting essentially of calcium carbonate or a combination of calcium carbonate with magnesium carbonate capable of neutralizing soil acidity.*

*(C) Industrial waste or industrial ~~by-products~~ byproducts that contain calcium; calcium and magnesium; or calcium, magnesium, and potassium in forms that are capable of neutralizing soil acidity and that are intended, sold, or offered for sale for agricultural purposes. For the purposes of this chapter, the terms “agricultural lime,” “lime,” and “agricultural liming material” ~~shall~~ have the same meaning.*

*(2) “Beneficial substance” means any substance or compound, other than primary, secondary, and micro plant nutrients (fertilizers), and excluding pesticides, that can be demonstrated by scientific research to be beneficial to one or more species of plants, soil, or media. Beneficial substances include plant amendments, plant biostimulants, plant inoculants, soil amendments, soil inoculants, and other chemical or biological substances beneficial to plants or their growing environment.*

*(3) “Brand” means a term, design, or trademark used in connection with one or more grades or formulas of fertilizer; ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime.*

*(3)(4) “Distribute” means to import, consign, manufacture, produce, compound, mix, blend, offer for sale, sell, barter, or supply a fertilizer; ~~a plant amendment, a plant biostimulant, a soil amendment~~ a beneficial substance, or lime in this State through any means, including sales outlets, catalogues, the telephone, the internet, or any electronic means.*

*(4)(5) “Distributor” means any person who distributes fertilizer; ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendments~~ beneficial substance, or lime.*

*(5)(6) “Exceptional quality biosolid” means a product derived in whole or in part from domestic wastes that have been subjected to and meet the requirements of the following:*

*(A) a pathogen reduction process established in 40 C.F.R. § 503.32(a)(3), (4), (7), or (8);*

*(B) one of the vector attraction reduction standards established in 40 C.F.R. § 503.33;*

*(C) the contaminant concentration limits in Vermont Solid Waste Rules § 6-1303(a)(1); and*

*(D) if derived from a composting process, Vermont Solid Waste Rules § 6-1303(a)(5).*

~~(6)(7)~~ “Fertilizer” means any substance containing one or more recognized plant nutrients that is used for its plant nutrient content and that is designed for use or claimed to have value in promoting plant growth or health, except unprocessed animal or vegetable manures and other products exempted by the Secretary.

(A) A fertilizer material is a substance that either:

(i) contains important quantities of at least one of the primary plant nutrients: nitrogen, phosphorus, or potassium;

(ii) has 85 percent or more of its plant nutrient content present in the form of a single chemical compound; or

(iii) is derived from a plant or chemical residue or ~~by-product~~ byproduct or natural material deposit that has been processed in such a way that its content of plant nutrients has not been materially changed except by purification and concentration.

(B) A mixed fertilizer is a fertilizer containing any combination or mixture of fertilizer materials.

(C) A specialty fertilizer is a fertilizer distributed for nonfarm use.

(D) A bulk fertilizer is a fertilizer distributed in a nonpackaged form.

~~(7)(8)~~ “Formulation” means a material or mixture of materials prepared according to a particular formula.

~~(8)~~(9) “Grade” means the percentage of total nitrogen, available phosphorus or phosphoric acid, and soluble potassium or potash stated in whole numbers in the same terms, order, or percentages as in the guaranteed analysis. Specialty fertilizers and fertilizer materials may be guaranteed in fractional terms. Any grade expressed in fractional terms that is not preceded by a whole number shall be preceded by zero.

~~(9)~~(10) “Guaranteed analysis” means:

(A) in reference to fertilizer, the minimum percentages of plant nutrients claimed by the manufacturer or producer of the product in the following order and form: nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash; and

(B) in reference to agricultural lime or agricultural liming material, the minimum percentages of calcium oxide and magnesium oxide or calcium carbonate and the calcium carbonate equivalent, or both, as claimed by the manufacturer or producer of the product.

~~(10)~~(11) “Label” means the display of all written, printed, or graphic matter upon the immediate container or a statement accompanying a fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime.

~~(11)~~(12) “Labeling” means all written, printed, or graphic material upon or accompanying any fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime, including advertisements, brochures,

*posters, and television and radio announcements used in promoting the sale of the fertilizer; ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime.*

*(~~12~~)(13) “Official sample” means any sample of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime taken by the Secretary.*

*(~~13~~)(14) “Plant amendment” means any substance applied to plants or seeds that is intended to improve growth, yield, product quality, reproduction, flavor, or other favorable characteristics of plants, except for fertilizer, soil amendments, agricultural liming materials, animal and vegetable manures, pesticides, plant regulators, and other materials exempted by rule adopted under this chapter.*

*(~~14~~)(15) “Plant biostimulant” means a substance ~~or~~ microorganism, or mixtures thereof that, when applied to seeds, plants, ~~or the rhizosphere, stimulates soil, or other growth media act to support a plant’s natural nutrition processes to enhance or benefit nutrient uptake, nutrient efficiency, tolerance to abiotic stress, or crop quality and yield, except for fertilizers, soil amendments, plant amendments, or pesticides~~ independently of the biostimulant’s nutrient content. The plant biostimulant thereby improves nutrient availability, uptake, or use efficiency; tolerance to abiotic stress; and consequent growth development, quality, or yield. ~~The Secretary may modify~~*

~~the definition of “plant biostimulant” by rule or procedure in order to maintain consistency with U.S. Department of Agriculture requirements.~~

(16) “Plant inoculant” means a product consisting of microorganisms to be applied to the plant or soil for the purpose of enhancing the availability or uptake of plant nutrients through the root system.

~~(15)(17) “Percent” or “percentage” means the percentage by weight.~~

~~(16)(18) “Primary nutrient” includes nitrogen, available phosphoric acid or phosphorus, and soluble potash or potassium.~~

~~(17)(19) “Product” means the name of the fertilizer, plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment beneficial substance, or lime that identifies it as to kind, class, or specific use.~~

~~(18)(20) “Registrant” means the person who registers a fertilizer, plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment beneficial substance, or lime under the provisions of this chapter.~~

~~(19)(21) “Soil amendment” means a substance or mixture of substance that is intended to improve the physical, chemical, biochemical, biological, or other characteristics of the soil or a distinct form of horticultural growing media used in lieu of soil. “Soil amendment” does not mean fertilizers, agricultural liming materials, unprocessed animal manures, unprocessed vegetable manures, pesticides, plant biostimulants, and other materials exempted by rule. A compost product from a facility under the jurisdiction of~~

*the Agency of Natural Resources' Solid Waste Management Rules or exceptional quality biosolids shall not be regulated as a soil amendment under this chapter, unless marketed and distributed for the use in the production of an agricultural commodity.*

*(22) "Soil inoculant" means a microbial product that is applied to colonize the soil to benefit the soil chemistry, biology, or structure.*

*(20)(23) "Ton" means a net weight of 2,000 pounds avoirdupois.*

*(21)(24) "Use" includes all purposes for which a fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime is applied.*

*(22)(25) "Weight" means the weight of undried material as offered for sale.*

#### *§ 364. REGISTRATION*

*(a) Each brand or grade or formula of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial substance shall be registered in the name of the person whose name appears upon the label before being distributed in this State. The application for registration shall be submitted to the Secretary on a form furnished by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and shall be accompanied by a fee of \$85.00 per grade or formulation registered. Upon approval by the Secretary, a copy of the registration shall be*



*furnished to the applicant. All registrations expire on December 31 of each year. The application shall include the following information:*

- (1) the brand and grade or formulation;*
- (2) the guaranteed analysis if applicable; and*
- (3) the name and address of the registrant.*

*(b) A distributor shall not be required to register any fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ or beneficial substance that is already registered under this chapter by another person, provided there is no change in the label for the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ or beneficial substance.*

*(c) Each beneficial substance brand shall refer to a specific formulation. Different brands may refer to the same specific formulation. Products for which formulations change, such as changes in the “Contains Beneficial Substances” analysis, statement of composition, or anything that implies a different product, must obtain a new registration with a brand that distinguishes it from the previous formulation.*

*(d) A distributor shall not be required to register each grade of fertilizer formulated or each formulation of soil amendment according to specifications that are furnished by a consumer prior to mixing but shall be required to label the fertilizer or soil amendment as provided in subsection 365(b) of this title.*

~~(d)~~(e) *The Secretary may request additional proof of testing of products prior to registration for guaranteed analyses or adulterants.*

~~(e)~~(f) *Each separately identified agricultural lime product shall be registered before being distributed in this State. Registration shall be performed in the same manner as fertilizer registration except that each application shall be accompanied by a fee of \$50.00 per product.*

~~(f)~~(g) *The registration and tonnage fees, along with any deficiency penalties collected pursuant to sections 331 and 372 of this title, shall be deposited in a special fund. Funds deposited in this fund shall be restricted to implementing and administering the provisions of this title and any other provisions of law relating to feeds and seeds.*

§ 365. LABELS

*(a)(1) Any fertilizer or agricultural lime distributed in this State in containers shall have placed on or affixed to the container a label setting forth in clearly legible and conspicuous form the following information:*

*(A) net weight;*

*(B) brand and grade, provided that grade shall not be required when no primary nutrients are claimed;*

*(C) guaranteed analysis; and*

*(D) name and address of the registrant.*

*(2) For bulk shipments, this information in written or printed form shall accompany delivery and be supplied to the purchaser at the time of delivery.*

*(b) A fertilizer or lime formulated according to specifications furnished by a consumer prior to mixing shall be labeled to show the net weight, the guaranteed analysis or name, analysis and weight of each ingredient used in the mixture, and the name and address of the distributor and purchaser.*

*(c) If the Secretary finds that a requirement for expressing calcium and magnesium in elemental form would not impose an economic hardship on distributors and users of agricultural liming materials by reason of conflicting label requirements among states, the Secretary may require by rule that the minimum percent of calcium oxide and magnesium oxide or calcium carbonate and magnesium carbonate, or both, shall be expressed in the following terms:*

*Total Calcium (Ca) ..... percent*

*Total Magnesium (Mg) ..... percent*

*(d)(1) Any ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial substance distributed in this State in containers shall have placed on or affixed to the container a label setting forth in clearly legible and conspicuous form the following information:*

*(A) net weight or volume;*

*(B) brand name;*

*(C) purpose statement identifying the purpose of the product;*

*(D) directions for application or use;*

*(E) guaranteed analysis; and*

*(F) name and address of the registrant; and*

*(F) a statement of composition showing the amount of each ingredient, which is the agent in a product primarily responsible for the intended effects using the following format:*

*CONTAINS BENEFICIAL SUBSTANCE(S)*

*Name of beneficial substance \_\_\_\_\_ % (or acceptable units)*

*Genus and species of microorganism \_\_\_\_\_ % viable CFU/cm<sup>3</sup>, /ml, /g, or other acceptable units*

*(Identify and list all beneficial substances. Substances shall include ingredient source, if applicable. Ex. "humic acid from leonardite or saponin from Yucca schidigera").*

*(2) For products that claim microorganisms, labels shall also include:*

*(A) the expiration date for use; and*

*(B) storage conditions.*

*(3) For bulk shipments of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substances, or lime, the information required under this subsection shall accompany delivery in written or printed form and shall be supplied to the purchaser at the time of delivery.*

(4) Efficacy data may be required to support beneficial substance ingredient claims if the ingredient is not presently defined by the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials' Official Publication for the particular claim.

~~(3)(5)~~ Under a rule adopted under this subsection, an affected person shall be given a reasonable time to come into compliance.

§ 366. TONNAGE FEES

(a) A person distributing fertilizer to a nonregistrant consumer in the State annually shall pay the following fees to the Secretary:

- (1) a \$150.00 minimum tonnage fee;
- (2) \$0.50 per ton of agricultural fertilizer distributed; and
- (3) \$30.00 per ton of nonagricultural fertilizer distributed.

(b) Persons distributing fertilizer shall report annually on or before January 15 for the previous year ending December 31 to the Secretary revealing the amounts of each grade of fertilizer and the form in which the fertilizer was distributed within this State. Each report shall be accompanied with payment and written permission allowing the Secretary to examine the person's books for the purpose of verifying tonnage reports.

(c) No information concerning tonnage sales furnished to the Secretary under this section shall be disclosed in such a way as to divulge the details of

*the business operation to any person unless it is necessary for the enforcement of the provisions of this chapter.*

*(d) Persons distributing a ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial substance in the State shall report annually on or before January 15 for the previous year ending December 31 to the Secretary revealing the amounts of each formulation of ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial substance and the form in which the ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial substance was distributed within this State. Each report shall include a written authorization allowing the Secretary to examine the person's books for the purpose of verifying tonnage reports. ~~Plant amendments, plant biostimulants, and soil amendments are~~ A beneficial substance is exempt from tonnage fees.*

*(e) Agricultural limes, including agricultural lime mixed with wood ash, are exempt from the tonnage fees required in this section.*

*(f) Lime and wood ash mixtures may be registered as agricultural liming materials and guaranteed for potassium or potash, provided that the wood ash totals less than 50 percent of the mixture.*

*(g)(1) All fees collected under subdivisions (a)(1) and (2) of this section shall be deposited in the special fund created by subsection 364(f) of this title and used in accordance with its provisions.*

*(2) All fees collected under subdivision (a)(3) of this section shall be deposited in the Agricultural Water Quality Special Fund created under section 4803 of this title.*

*(h) [Repealed.]*

*§ 367. INSPECTION; SAMPLING; ANALYSIS*

*For the purpose of enforcing this chapter and determining whether ~~or not~~ fertilizers, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendments~~ beneficial substances, and lime distributed in this State endanger the health and safety of Vermont citizens, the Secretary upon presenting appropriate credentials is authorized:*

*(1) To enter any public or private premises except domiciles during regular business hours and stop and enter any vehicle being used to transport or hold fertilizer; ~~a plant amendment, a plant biostimulant, a soil amendment~~ beneficial substances, or lime.*

*(2) To inspect blending plants, warehouses, establishments, vehicles, equipment, finished or unfinished materials, containers, labeling, and records relating to distribution, storage, or use.*

*(3) To sample and analyze any fertilizer; ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime. The methods of sampling and analysis shall be those adopted by the Association of Official Analytical Chemists. In cases not covered by this method or in cases where*

*methods are available in which improved applicability has been demonstrated, the Secretary may authorize and adopt methods that reflect sound analytical procedures.*

*(4) To develop any reasonable means necessary to monitor and adopt rules for the use of fertilizers, ~~plant amendments, plant biostimulants, soil amendments~~ beneficial substances, and lime on Vermont soils where monitoring indicates environmental or health problems. In addition, the Secretary may develop and adopt rules for the proper storage of fertilizers, ~~plant amendments, plant biostimulants, soil amendments~~ beneficial substances, and lime held for distribution or sale.*

*§ 368. MISBRANDING*

*(a) No person shall distribute a misbranded fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or agricultural lime. A fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial substance shall be deemed to be misbranded if the Secretary determines one or more of the following:*

*(1) The labeling is false or misleading in any particular.*

*(2) It is distributed under the name of another fertilizer product, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial substance.*

*(3) It contains unsubstantiated claims.*



*(4) It is not labeled as required in section 365 of this title and in accordance with rules adopted under this chapter.*

*(5) It is labeled, or represented, to contain a plant nutrient that does not conform to the standard of identity established by rule. In adopting rules under this chapter, the Secretary shall ~~give consideration to~~ consider definitions recommended by the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials.*

*(b) An agricultural lime shall be deemed to be misbranded if:*

*(1) its labeling is false or misleading in any particular; or*

*(2) it is not labeled as required by section 365 of this title and in accordance with rules adopted under this chapter.*

#### *§ 369. ADULTERATION*

*No person shall distribute an adulterated lime, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or fertilizer product. A fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime shall be deemed to be adulterated if:*

*(1) it contains any deleterious or harmful ingredient in an amount sufficient to render it injurious to beneficial plant life, animals, humans, aquatic life, soil, or water when applied in accordance with directions for use on the label, or if uses of the product may result in contamination or condemnation of a raw agricultural commodity by use, or if adequate warning*

*statements or directions for use that may be necessary to protect plant life, animals, humans, aquatic life, soil, or water are not shown on the label;*

*(2) its composition falls below or differs from that which it is purported to possess by its labeling;*

*(3) it contains crop seed or weed seed; or*

*(4) it contains heavy metals, radioactive substances, or synthetic organics in amounts sufficient to render it injurious to livestock or human health when applied in accordance with directions for use on the label, or if adequate warning statements or directions for use that may be necessary to protect livestock or human health are not shown on the label.*

*§ 370. PUBLICATION; CONSUMER INFORMATION REGARDING USE*

*ON NONAGRICULTURAL TURF OF FERTILIZER, ~~PLANT~~*

*AMENDMENTS, ~~PLANT BIOSTIMULANTS, AND SOIL~~*

*AMENDMENTS BENEFICIAL SUBSTANCES*

*(a) The Secretary shall publish on an annual basis:*

*(1) information concerning the distribution of fertilizers, ~~plant~~ amendments, ~~plant biostimulants, soil-amendments~~ beneficial substances, and limes; and*

*(2) results of analyses based on official samples of fertilizers, ~~plant~~ amendments, ~~plant biostimulants, soil-amendments~~ beneficial substances, and*

*lime distributed within the State as compared with guaranteed analyses required pursuant to the terms of this chapter:*

*(b)(1) The Secretary, in consultation with the University of Vermont Extension, fertilizer industry representatives, lake groups, and other interested or affected parties, shall produce information for distribution to the general public with respect to the following:*

*(A) problems faced by the waters of the State because of discharges of phosphorus;*

*(B) an explanation of the extent to which phosphorus exists naturally in the soil;*

*(C) voluntary best management practices for the use of fertilizers containing phosphorus on nonagricultural turf; and*

*(D) best management practices for residential sources of phosphorus.*

*(2) The Secretary shall develop the information required under this subsection and make it available to the general public in the manner deemed most effective, which may include:*

*(A) conspicuous posting at the point of retail sale of fertilizer containing phosphorus, according to recommendations for how that conspicuous posting may best take place;*

*(B) public service announcements by means of electronic media; or*

*(C) other methods deemed by the Secretary to be likely to be effective.*

\* \* \*

*§ 371. RULES*

*The Secretary is authorized to adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 as may be necessary to implement the intent of this chapter and to enforce those rules.*

\* \* \*

*§ 374. SHORT WEIGHT*

*(a) If any fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or agricultural liming material is found to be short in net weight, the registrant of the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime shall pay a penalty of three times the value of the actual shortage to the affected party.*

*(b) Each registrant shall be offered an opportunity for a hearing before the Secretary. Penalty payments shall be made within 30 days after notice of the Secretary's decision to assess a penalty. Proof of payment to the consumer shall be promptly forwarded to the Secretary by the registrant.*

*(c) If the consumer cannot be found, the amount of the penalty payments shall be paid to the Secretary who shall deposit the payment into the revolving account established by subsection 364(f) of this title.*

*(d) This section is not an exclusive cause of action, and persons affected may utilize any other right of action available under law.*

*§ 375. CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION*

*The Secretary is authorized to cancel or suspend the registration of any fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime or refuse a registration application if the provisions of this chapter or the rules adopted under this chapter have been violated, provided that no registration shall be revoked or refused without a hearing before the Secretary.*

*§ 376. DETAINED FERTILIZER, BENEFICIAL SUBSTANCE, AND LIME*

*(a) Withdrawal from distribution orders. When the Secretary has reasonable cause to believe any lot of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime is being distributed in violation of any of the provisions of this chapter or any of the rules under this chapter, the Secretary may issue and enforce a written or printed “withdrawal from distribution” order, warning the distributor not to dispose of the lot of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime in any manner until written permission is given by the Secretary or the court. The Secretary shall release the lot of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime withdrawn when this chapter and rules have been complied with. If*

*compliance is not obtained within 30 days, the Secretary may begin, or upon request of the distributor or registrant shall begin, proceedings for condemnation.*

*(b) Condemnation and confiscation. Any lot of fertilizer, ~~plant amendment,~~ ~~plant biostimulant,~~ ~~soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime not in compliance with this chapter and rules shall be subject to seizure on complaint of the Secretary to a court of competent jurisdiction in the area in which the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment,~~ ~~plant biostimulant,~~ ~~soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime is located. In the event the court finds the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment,~~ ~~plant biostimulant,~~ ~~soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime to be in violation of this chapter and orders the condemnation of the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment,~~ ~~plant biostimulant,~~ ~~soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime, it shall be disposed of in any manner consistent with the quality of the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment,~~ ~~plant biostimulant,~~ ~~soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime and the laws of the State, provided that in no instance shall disposition of the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment,~~ ~~plant biostimulant,~~ ~~soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime be ordered by the court without first giving the claimant an opportunity to apply to the court for release of the fertilizer, ~~plant amendment,~~ ~~plant biostimulant,~~ ~~soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime or for permission to process or relabel the fertilizer, ~~plant~~*

~~amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime to bring it into compliance with this chapter.

\* \* \*

§ 379. EXCHANGES BETWEEN MANUFACTURERS

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to restrict or impair sales or exchanges of fertilizers, ~~plant amendments, plant biostimulants, or soil amendments~~ or beneficial substances to each other by importers, manufacturers, or manipulators who mix fertilizer materials, ~~plant amendments, plant biostimulants, or soil amendments~~ or beneficial substances for sale or to prevent the free and unrestricted shipments of fertilizer, ~~plant amendments, plant biostimulant, or soil amendments~~ or beneficial substances to manufacturers or manipulators who have registered their brands as required by provisions of this chapter.

§ 380. ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY

Consistent with chapter 1 of this title, the Secretary may assess an administrative penalty upon determining that a person has violated a rule issued under this chapter or has violated this chapter in the following manner:

(1) distributed a specialty fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime without first obtaining the appropriate product registration;

*(2) distributed a fertilizer, ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, soil amendment~~ beneficial substance, or lime without appropriate and accurate labeling, including when a beneficial substance label does not reflect its composition;*

*(3) distributed any adulterated fertilizer, beneficial substance, or lime;*

*(4) failed to disclose on the label sources of potentially deleterious components;*

*(5) failed to report or to accurately report the amount and form of each grade of fertilizer distributed in Vermont on an annual basis;*

*(4)(6) failed to report or to accurately report the amount and form of each formulation of ~~plant amendment, plant biostimulant, or soil amendment~~ beneficial substance;*

*(5)(7) failed to pay the appropriate tonnage fee; or*

*(6)(8) violated a cease and desist order.*

\* \* \*

\* \* \* *Pesticides; Disposal* \* \* \*

*Sec. 2. 6 V.S.A. § 918 is amended to read:*

*§ 918. REGISTRATION*

\* \* \*

*(b)(1) The registrant shall pay an annual fee of \$200.00 for each product registered, and \$185.00 of that amount shall be deposited in the special fund*



*created in section 929 of this title. Of the registration fees collected under this subsection, \$15.00 of the amount collected shall be deposited in the Agricultural Water Quality Special Fund under section 4803 of this title. Of the registration fees collected under this subsection, \$25.00 of the amount collected shall be used to offset the additional costs of inspection of economic poison products and to provide educational services, training, and technical assistance to pesticide applicators, beekeepers, and the general public regarding the effects of pesticides on pollinators and the methods or best management practices to reduce the impacts of pesticides on pollinators. The annual registration year shall be from December 1 to November 30 of the following year:*

*(2) In addition to the fee required under subdivision (1) of this subsection, a registrant shall pay a fee of \$50.00 per product registration that shall be deposited in the special fund created in section 929 of this title and used to meet the requirements of subdivision 929(a)(6) of this title. This additional fee shall be collected from registrants until such time as an extended producer responsibility program is implemented in the State that fully funds the collection of obsolete and unwanted pesticides.*

\* \* \*

*Sec. 3. PESTICIDE DISPOSAL FUNDING STUDY*

(a)(1) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets, in consultation with the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, shall study options for sustainable funding sources to reimburse solid waste management entities for all costs associated with the collection and disposal of unwanted or obsolete pesticides at municipal hazardous waste collection programs and events.

(2) The costs to be reimbursed shall include the prorated costs related to facilities, equipment, labor, supplies, maintenance, and collection events. Prorated costs associated with collection events shall include collection event setup fees, environmental service fees, insurance fees, and shipping containers and materials related to the collection and disposal of unwanted or obsolete pesticides.

(3) The study shall include consideration of the viability of an extended producer responsibility program for pesticides among other options.

(4) The Secretary shall consult with stakeholders.

(b) On or before December 15, 2025, the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall submit a written report on its findings to the House Committees on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry and on Environment and the Senate Committees on Agriculture and on Natural Resources and Energy. The report shall include a recommended funding mechanism that will cover all costs associated with collecting unwanted pesticides through municipal collection programs.

*\* \* \* Stormwater Permits \* \* \**

*Sec. 4. STORMWATER PERMITTING; RUTLAND COUNTY*

*AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, INC.*

*No stormwater impact fee or completion of an offset shall be required for the Rutland County Agricultural Society, Inc. under the three-acre stormwater permit required by 10 V.S.A. § 1264, provided that the Society is registered with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.*

*\* \* \* Use Value Appraisal \* \* \**

*Sec. 3. 32 V.S.A. § 3752(1) is amended to read:*

*(1) "Agricultural land" means any land, exclusive of any housesite, in active use to grow hay or cultivated crops, pasture livestock, cultivate trees bearing edible fruit, or produce an annual maple product, and that is 25 acres or more in size, except as provided in this subdivision (4). Agricultural land shall include buffer zones as defined and required in the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' Required Agricultural Practices rule adopted under 6 V.S.A. chapter 215. There shall be a presumption that the land is used for agricultural purposes if:*

*(A) it is owned by a farmer and is part of the overall farm unit;*

*(B) it is used by a farmer as part of the farmer's operation under*

*written lease for at least three years, or*

~~(C) it has produced an annual gross income from the sale of farm crops or the equivalent value of donated farm crops in one of two, or three of the five, calendar years preceding of at least:~~

~~(i) \$2,000.00 for parcels of up to 25 acres; and,~~

~~(ii) \$75.00 per acre for each acre over 25, with the total income required not to exceed \$5,000.00.~~

~~(iii) Exceptions to these income requirements may be made in cases of orchard lands planted to fruit-producing trees, bushes, or vines that are not yet of bearing age. As used in this section, the term "farm crops" also includes animal fiber, cider, wine, and cheese, produced on the enrolled land or on a housesite adjoining the enrolled land, from agricultural products grown on the enrolled land.~~

Sec. 5. [Deleted.]

\* \* \* Heavy Cut Rule \* \* \*

Sec. 6. DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, PARKS AND RECREATION;

HEAVY CUT RULE; VALIDITY

(a) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214 to the contrary:

(1) the provisions of 3 V.S.A. § 848(c) (repeal of rules not published in the Vermont Code of Rules as of July 1, 2018) shall be deemed not to have repealed the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation rule entitled "Intent to Cut Notification Emergency Rules, Standards and Procedures"; and

(2) the provisions of the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation rule entitled “Intent to Cut Notification Emergency Rules, Standards and Procedures” shall be deemed to have continued in full force and effect and remained valid on and after July 1, 2018.

(b)(1) All actions taken by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation from July 1, 2018 through July 1, 2025 to grant or deny an authorization to proceed with a heavy cut pursuant to the provisions of 10 V.S.A. § 2625 and the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation rule entitled “Intent to Cut Notification Emergency Rules, Standards and Procedures” are valid and enforceable.

(2) As used in this subsection, the term “heavy cut” has the same meaning as in 10 V.S.A. § 2625.

(c) On or before July 1, 2026, the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation shall publish the rule entitled “Intent to Cut Notification Emergency Rules, Standards and Procedures” in the Vermont Code of Rules.

\* \* \* Household Hazardous Waste Extended Producer Responsibility \* \* \*

Sec. 7. 10 V.S.A. § 7181 is amended to read:

§ 7181. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

\* \* \*

*(4)(A) “Covered household hazardous product” means a consumer product offered for retail sale that is contained in the receptacle in which the product is offered for retail sale, if the product has any of the following characteristics:*

*(i) the product or a component of the product is a hazardous waste under subchapter 2 of the Vermont Hazardous Waste Management Regulations, regardless of the status of the generator of the hazardous waste; or*

*(ii) the product is a gas cylinder.*

*(B) “Covered household hazardous product” does not mean any of the following:*

*\* \* \**

*(iv) ~~architectural paint~~ paint products as that term is defined in section 6672 of this title;*

*\* \* \**

*Sec. 8. 10 V.S.A. § 7182 is amended to read:*

*§ 7182. SALE OF COVERED HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS;*

*STEWARDSHIP ORGANIZATION REGISTRATION;*

*MANUFACTURER REGISTRATION*

*(a) Sale prohibited.*

*(1) A manufacturer of a covered household hazardous product shall not sell, offer for sale, or deliver to a retailer for subsequent sale a covered household hazardous product without registering with the stewardship organization pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.*

*(2) Beginning six months after a final decision on the adequacy of a collection plan by the Secretary, a manufacturer of a covered household hazardous product shall not sell, offer for sale, or deliver to a retailer for subsequent sale a covered household hazardous product unless all the following have been met:*

*~~(1)~~(A) The manufacturer is participating in a stewardship organization implementing an approved collection plan.*

*~~(2)~~(B) The name of the manufacturer, the manufacturer's brand, and the name of the covered household hazardous product are submitted to the Agency of Natural Resources by a stewardship organization and listed on the stewardship organization's website as covered by an approved collection plan.*

*~~(3)~~(C) The stewardship organization in which the manufacturer participates has submitted an annual report consistent with the requirements of section 7185 of this title.*

*~~(4)~~(D) The stewardship organization in which the manufacturer participates has conducted a plan audit consistent with the requirements of subsection 7185(b) of this title.*

*(b) Stewardship organization registration requirements.*

*(1) On or before July 1, 2025 and annually thereafter, a stewardship organization shall file a registration form with the Secretary. The Secretary shall provide the registration form to the stewardship organization. The registration form shall include:*

*(A) a list of the manufacturers participating in the stewardship organization;*

*(B) a list of the brands of each manufacturer participating in the stewardship organization;*

*(C) a list of the covered household hazardous products of each manufacturer participating in the stewardship organization;*

*(D) the name, address, and contact information of a person responsible for ensuring compliance with this chapter;*

*(E) a description of how the stewardship organization meets the requirements of subsection 7184(b) of this title, including any reasonable requirements for participation in the stewardship organization; and*

*(F)(B) the name, address, and contact information of a person for a nonmember manufacturer to contact regarding how to participate in the stewardship organization to satisfy the requirements of this chapter.*

*(2) A renewal of a registration without changes may be accomplished through notifying the Agency of Natural Resources on a form provided by the*



Agency Beginning on July 1, 2026 and annually thereafter, a stewardship organization shall renew its registration with the Secretary. A renewal registration shall include the following:

(A) a list of the manufacturers participating in the stewardship organization;

(B) a list of the brands of each manufacturer participating in the stewardship organization;

(C) a list of the covered household hazardous products of each manufacturer participating in the stewardship organization;

(D) the name, address, and contact information of a person responsible for ensuring compliance with this chapter;

(E) a description of how the stewardship organization meets the requirements of subsection 7184(b) of this title, including any reasonable requirements for participation in the stewardship organization; and

(F) the name, address, and contact information of a person for a nonmember manufacturer to contact regarding how to participate in the stewardship organization to satisfy the requirements of this chapter.

(c) Manufacturer registration. On or before November 1, 2025, a manufacturer of a covered household hazardous product shall register with the stewardship organization in a manner proscribed by the stewardship organization.

*Sec. 9. 10 V.S.A. § 7183 is amended to read:*

*§ 7183. COLLECTION PLANS*

*(a) Collection plan required. ~~Prior to July 1, 2025~~ On or before July 1, 2026, any stewardship organization registered with the Secretary as representing manufacturers of covered household hazardous products shall coordinate and submit to the Secretary for review one collection plan for all manufacturers.*

*(b) Collection plan; minimum requirements. ~~Each collection plan shall include, at a minimum, all of the following requirements:~~*

*(1) Initial plan. The initial plan shall last for a period not to exceed three years and contain, at a minimum, the following requirements:*

*(A) List of participants. A list of the manufacturers, brands, and products participating in the collection plan and a methodology for adding and removing manufacturers and notifying the Agency of new participants.*

*(2)(B) Free statewide collection of covered household hazardous products. The collection program shall ~~provide~~ reimburse municipalities when a municipality provides for free, convenient, and accessible statewide opportunities for the collection from covered entities of covered household hazardous products, including orphan covered products. A stewardship organization shall accept all covered household hazardous products collected from a covered entity and shall not refuse the collection of a covered household*

~~hazardous product, including orphan covered household products, based on the brand or manufacturer of the covered household hazardous product unless specifically exempt from this requirement. The collection program shall also provide for the payment of collection, processing, and end-of-life management of the covered household hazardous products. Collection costs include facility costs, equipment costs, labor, supplies, maintenance, events costs, and event contractor costs, including collection event set-up fees, environmental service fees, insurance fees, and shipping containers and materials.~~

~~(3) Convenient collection location. The stewardship organization shall develop a collection program that allows all municipal household hazardous waste collection programs to opt to be a part of the collection plan, including collection events and facilities offered by solid waste planning entities. The plan shall make efforts to site points of collection equitably across all regions of the State to allow for convenient and reasonable access of all Vermonters to collection facilities or collection events.~~

~~(4) Public education and outreach. The collection plan shall include an education and outreach program that shall include a website and may include media advertising, retail displays, articles and publications, and other public educational efforts. Outreach and education shall be suitable for the State's diverse ethnic populations, through translated and culturally appropriate materials, including in-language and targeted outreach. Public education and~~

~~outreach should include content to increase meaningful participation by environmental justice focus populations as required by 3 V.S.A. chapter 72. During the first year of program implementation and two years after adoption of the collection plan, each stewardship organization shall carry out a survey of public awareness regarding the requirements of the program established under this chapter that can identify communities that have disparities in awareness and need more outreach. Each stewardship organization shall share the results of the public awareness surveys with the Secretary. If multiple stewardship organizations are implementing plans approved by the Secretary, the stewardship organizations shall coordinate in carrying out their education and outreach responsibilities under this subdivision and shall include in their annual reports to the Secretary a summary of their coordinated education and outreach efforts. The education and outreach program and website shall notify the public of the following:~~

~~(A) that there is a free collection program for covered household hazardous products;~~

~~(B) the location and hours of operation of collection points and how a covered entity can access this collection program;~~

~~(C) the special handling considerations associated with covered household hazardous products; and~~

~~(D) source reduction information for consumers to reduce leftover covered household products.~~

~~(5) Compliance with appropriate environmental standards. In implementing a collection plan, a stewardship organization shall comply with all applicable laws related to the collection, transportation, and disposal of hazardous waste. A stewardship organization shall comply with any special handling or disposal standards established by the Secretary for covered household hazardous products or for the collection plan of the manufacturer.~~

~~(6) Method of disposition. The collection plan shall describe how covered household hazardous products will be managed in the most environmentally and economically sound manner, including following the waste management hierarchy. The management of covered household hazardous products under the collection plan shall use management activities in the following priority order: source reduction, reuse, recycling, energy recovery, and disposal. Collected covered household hazardous products shall be recycled when technically and economically feasible.~~

~~(7) Performance goals. A collection plan shall include:~~

~~(A) A performance goal for covered household hazardous products determined by the number of total participants at collection events and facilities listed in the collection plan during a program year divided by the total number of households. The number of households shall include seasonal~~

~~households. The calculation methodology for the number of households shall be included in the plan.~~

~~(B) At a minimum, the collection performance goal for the first approved plan shall be an annual participation rate of five percent of the households for every collection program based on the number of households the collection program serves. After the initial approved program plan, the stewardship organization shall propose performance goals for subsequent program plans. The Secretary shall approve the performance goals for the plan at least every five years. The stewardship organization shall use the results of the most recent waste composition study required under 6604 of this title and other relevant factors to propose the performance goals of the collection plan. If a stewardship organization does not meet its performance goals, the Secretary may require the stewardship organization to revise the collection plan to provide for one or more of the following: additional public education and outreach, additional collection events, or additional hours of operation for collection sites. A stewardship organization is not authorized to reduce or cease collection, education and outreach, or other activities implemented under an approved plan on the basis of achievement of program performance goals.~~

~~(8)(C) Collection plan funding. The collection plan shall describe how the stewardship organization will fund the implementation of the collection~~

~~plan and collection activities under the plan, including the costs for education and outreach, collection, processing, and end-of-life management of the covered household hazardous product all municipal collection offered to the public in a base program year. A base program year shall be based on the services provided in calendar year 2024 and any other collection facilities or events approved by the Secretary. Collection costs include facility costs, equipment costs, labor, supplies, maintenance, events costs, and event contractor costs, including collection event set-up fees, environmental service fees, insurance fees, and shipping containers and materials. The collection plan shall include how municipalities will be compensated for all costs attributed to collection of covered household hazardous products. The Secretary shall resolve disputes relating to compensation.~~

~~(2) Subsequent plans. After the expiration of the initial plan approved by the Secretary, the collection plan shall include, at a minimum, the following:~~

~~(A) List of participants. A list of the manufacturers, brands, and products participating in the collection plan and a methodology for adding and removing manufacturers and notifying the Agency of new participants.~~

~~(B) Free statewide collection of covered household hazardous products. The collection program shall provide for free, convenient, and accessible statewide opportunities for the collection from covered entities of~~

covered household hazardous products, including orphan covered products. A stewardship organization shall accept all covered household hazardous products collected from a covered entity and shall not refuse the collection of a covered household hazardous product, including orphan covered household products, based on the brand or manufacturer of the covered household hazardous product unless specifically exempt from this requirement. The collection program shall also provide for the payment of collection, processing, and end-of-life management of the covered household hazardous products. Collection costs include facility costs, equipment costs, labor, supplies, maintenance, events costs, and event contractor costs, including collection event set-up fees, environmental service fees, insurance fees, and shipping containers and materials.

(C) Convenient collection location. The stewardship organization shall develop a collection program that allows all municipal household hazardous waste collection programs to opt to be a part of the collection plan, including collection events and facilities offered by solid waste planning entities. The plan shall make efforts to site points of collection equitably across all regions of the State to allow for convenient and reasonable access of all Vermonters to collection facilities or collection events.

(D) Public education and outreach. The collection plan shall include an education and outreach program that shall include a website and may



include media advertising, retail displays, articles and publications, and other public educational efforts. Outreach and education shall be suitable for the State's diverse ethnic populations, through translated and culturally appropriate materials, including in-language and targeted outreach. Public education and outreach should include content to increase meaningful participation by environmental justice focus populations as required by 3 V.S.A. chapter 72. During the second approved plan, each stewardship organization shall carry out a survey of public awareness regarding the requirements of the program established under this chapter that can identify communities that have disparities in awareness and need more outreach. Each stewardship organization shall share the results of the public awareness surveys with the Secretary. If multiple stewardship organizations are implementing plans approved by the Secretary, the stewardship organizations shall coordinate in carrying out their education and outreach responsibilities under this subdivision (D) and shall include in their annual reports to the Secretary a summary of their coordinated education and outreach efforts. The education and outreach program and website shall notify the public of the following:

(i) that there is a free collection program for covered household hazardous products;

(ii) the location and hours of operation of collection points and how a covered entity can access this collection program;

(iii) the special handling considerations associated with covered household hazardous products; and

(iv) source reduction information for consumers to reduce leftover covered household products.

(E) Compliance with appropriate environmental standards. In implementing a collection plan, a stewardship organization shall comply with all applicable laws related to the collection, transportation, and disposal of hazardous waste. A stewardship organization shall comply with any special handling or disposal standards established by the Secretary for covered household hazardous products or for the collection plan of the manufacturer.

(F) Method of management. The collection plan shall describe how covered household hazardous products will be managed in the most environmentally and economically sound manner, including following the waste-management hierarchy. The management of covered household hazardous products under the collection plan shall use management activities in the following priority order: source reduction, reuse, recycling, energy recovery, and disposal. Collected covered household hazardous products shall be recycled when technically and economically feasible.

(G) Performance goals. A collection plan shall include:

(i) A performance goal for covered household hazardous products determined by the number of total participants at collection events and facilities listed in the collection plan during a program year divided by the total number of households. The number of households shall include seasonal households. The calculation methodology for the number of households shall be included in the plan.

(ii) At a minimum, the collection performance goal for the initial plan approved pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection (b) shall be an annual participation rate of seven percent of the households for every collection program based on the number of households the collection program serves. After the initial approved program plan, the stewardship organization shall propose performance goals for subsequent program plans. The Secretary shall approve the performance goals for the plan at least every five years. The stewardship organization shall use the results of the most recent waste composition study required under 6604 of this title and other relevant factors to propose the performance goals of the collection plan. If a stewardship organization does not meet its performance goals, the Secretary may require the stewardship organization to revise the collection plan to provide for one or more of the following: additional public education and outreach, additional collection events, or additional hours of operation for collection sites. A stewardship organization is not authorized to reduce or cease collection,

education and outreach, or other activities implemented under an approved plan on the basis of achievement of program performance goals.

(H) Collection plan funding. The collection plan shall describe how the stewardship organization will fund the implementation of the collection plan and collection activities under the plan, including the costs for education and outreach, collection, processing, and end-of-life management of the covered household hazardous product. Collection costs include facility costs, equipment costs, labor, supplies, maintenance, events costs, and event contractor costs, including collection event set-up fees, environmental service fees, insurance fees, and shipping containers and materials. The collection plan shall include how municipalities will be compensated for all costs attributed to collection of covered household hazardous products. The Secretary shall resolve disputes relating to compensation.

(c) Term of collection plan. A collection plan approved by the Secretary under section 7187 of this title shall have a term not to exceed five years, provided that the stewardship organization remains in compliance with the requirements of this chapter and the terms of the approved collection plan.

(d) Collection plan implementation. Stewardship organizations shall implement the collection plan on or before six months after the date of a final decision by the Secretary on the adequacy of the collection plan.

*Sec. 10. 10 V.S.A. § 7184 is amended to read:*

*§ 7184. STEWARDSHIP ORGANIZATIONS*

*(a) Participation in a stewardship organization. A manufacturer shall meet the requirements of this chapter by participating in a stewardship organization that undertakes the responsibilities under sections 7182, 7183, and 7185 of this title.*

*(b) Qualifications for a stewardship organization. To qualify as a stewardship organization under this chapter, an organization shall:*

*(1) commit to assume the responsibilities, obligations, and liabilities of all manufacturers participating in the stewardship organization;*

*(2) not create unreasonable barriers for participation in the stewardship organization; and*

*(3) maintain a public website that lists all manufacturers and manufacturers' brands and products covered by the stewardship organization's approved collection plan.*

*(c) A stewardship organization is authorized to charge its members reasonable fees for the organization, administration, and implementation of the programs required by this chapter.*

*Sec. 11. 10 V.S.A. § 7187 is amended to read:*

*§ 7187. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES*

*(a) Review and approve collection plans. The Secretary shall review and approve or deny collection plans submitted under section 7183 of this title according to the public notice and comment requirements of section 7714 of this title.*

*\* \* \**

*(g) Agency collection plan. If no stewardship organization is formed on or before July 1, 2025 or the stewardship organization fails to submit a plan or submits a plan that does not meet the requirements of this chapter, the Secretary shall adopt and administer a plan that meets the requirements of section 7183 of this title. If the Secretary administers the plan adopted under section 7183, the Secretary shall charge each manufacturer the prorated costs of plan administration, the Agency's oversight costs, and an additional hazardous waste reduction assessment of 10 percent of the plan's total cost to be deposited in the Solid Waste Management Assistance Account of the Waste Management Assistance Fund, for the purpose of providing grants to municipalities and small businesses to prevent pollution and reduce the generation of hazardous waste in the State. When determining a manufacturer's assessment under this section, the Agency may allocate costs to a manufacturer of covered household hazardous products based on the sales of*

covered household hazardous products nationally prorated to the population of Vermont.

*Sec. 12. 10 V.S.A. § 6621a is amended to read:*

*§ 6621a. LANDFILL DISPOSAL REQUIREMENTS*

*(a) In accordance with the following schedule, no person shall knowingly dispose of the following materials in solid waste or in landfills:*

*\* \* \**

*(12) Covered household hazardous products after July 1, ~~2025~~ 2026.*

*\* \* \**

*Sec. 13. SOLID WASTE PLAN; FLEXIBILITY*

*(a) Notwithstanding the municipal household hazardous waste (HHW) collection requirements under the State Solid Waste Plan adopted pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 6604, the Secretary of Natural Resources may grant a variance from the requirement to conduct at least two household hazardous waste collection events in that municipality. The variance shall allow a municipality to meet its obligations, as follows:*

*(1) the municipality has partnered with another municipality to allow its residents the ability to access a permanent HHW facility in the same manner as the municipality that operates the permanent HHW facility;*

*(2) the municipality has partnered with a nearby municipality to offer collection events to members in both municipalities; or*

(3) the municipality has demonstrated that it has made reasonable efforts to provide alternate collection opportunities identified under subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection and was unable and that the cost of a collection event is unreasonable. In such circumstances the Secretary of Natural Resources may reduce the required collection events to one per year.

(b) This section shall be repealed on July 1, 2027.

*\* \* \* Paint Product Stewardship Program \* \* \**

*Sec. 14. 10 V.S.A. chapter 159, subchapter 4 is amended to read:*

*Subchapter 4. Paint Product Stewardship Program*

*§ 6671. PURPOSE*

*The purpose of this subchapter is to establish an environmentally sound, cost-effective Paint Product Stewardship Program in the State that will undertake responsibility for the development and implementation of strategies to reduce the generation of postconsumer paint; promote the reuse of postconsumer paint; and collect, transport, and process postconsumer paint, including reuse, recycling, energy recovery, and disposal. The Paint Product Stewardship Program will follow the waste management hierarchy for managing and reducing postconsumer paint in the order as follows: reduce consumer generation of postconsumer paint, reuse, recycle, provide for energy recovery, and dispose. The Paint Product Stewardship Program will provide more opportunities for consumers to manage properly their postconsumer*



*paint, provide fiscal relief for local government in managing postconsumer paint, keep paint out of the waste stream, and conserve natural resources.*

*§ 6672. DEFINITIONS*

*As used in this subchapter:*

*(1) “Aerosol coating product” means a pressurized coating product containing pigments or resins dispensed by means of a propellant and packaged and sold in a disposable aerosol container for handheld application, or for use in specialized equipment for ground traffic or marking applications.*

*(2) “Architectural paint” means interior and exterior architectural coatings, including interior or exterior water- and oil-based coatings, primers, sealers, or wood coatings, that are sold in containers of five gallons or less. “Architectural paint” does not mean industrial coatings, original equipment coatings, or specialty coatings.*

*(3) “Coating-related product” means a product used as a paint additive, paint thinner, paint colorant, paint remover, surface sealant, surface preparation, or surface adhesive, and sold for home improvement. “Coating-related product” does not mean original equipment manufacturer products or industrial products.*

*(2)(4) “Distributor” means a company that has a contractual relationship with one or more producers to market and sell architectural paint to retailers in Vermont.*

~~(3)(5)~~ “Energy recovery” means recovery in which all or a part of the solid waste materials are processed in order to use the heat content or other forms of energy of or from the material.

~~(4)(6)~~ “Environmentally sound management practices” means policies to be implemented by a producer or a stewardship organization to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and also addressing such issues as adequate record keeping, tracking and documenting the fate of materials within the State and beyond, and adequate environmental liability coverage for professional services and for the operations of the contractors working on behalf of the producer organization.

~~(5)(7)~~ “Municipality” means a city, town, or a village.

~~(6)~~ “Paint stewardship assessment” means a one-time charge that is:

~~(A)~~ added to the purchase price of architectural paint sold in Vermont;

~~(B)~~ passed from the producer to the wholesale purchaser to the retailer and then to a retail consumer; and

~~(C)~~ necessary to cover the cost of collecting, transporting, and processing the postconsumer paint managed through the statewide Program.

~~(8)~~ “Nonindustrial coating” means arts and crafts paint, automotive refinish paint, driveway sealer, faux finish or glaze, furniture oil, furniture paint, lime wash, lime paint, marine paint, antifouling paint, road and traffic

marking paint, two-component paint, wood preservative, fire retardant paint, dry fog paint, chalkboard paint, and conductive paint, sold in containers of five gallons or less for commercial and homeowner use, but does not include coatings purchased for industrial or original equipment manufacturer use.

(9)(A) “Paint product” includes:

(i) architectural paint;

(ii) aerosol coating products;

(iii) coating-related products; and

(iv) nonindustrial coatings.

(B) “Paint product” does not include a health and beauty product.

(7)(10) “Postconsumer paint” means ~~architectural~~ a paint product and its containers not used and no longer wanted by a purchaser.

(8)(11) “Producer” means a manufacturer of ~~architectural~~ paint products who sells, offers for sale, or distributes that paint in Vermont under the producer’s own name or brand.

(9)(12) “Recycling” means any process by which discarded products, components, and by-products are transformed into new usable or marketable materials in a manner in which the original products may lose their identity but does not include energy recovery or energy generation by means of combusting discarded products, components, and by-products with or without other waste products.

~~(10)~~(13) “Retailer” means any person that offers ~~architectural~~ a paint product for sale at retail in Vermont.

~~(11)~~(14) “Reuse” means the return of a product into the economic stream for use in the same kind of application as originally intended, without a change in the product’s identity.

~~(12)~~(15) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Natural Resources.

~~(13)~~(16) “Sell” or “sale” means any transfer of title for consideration, including remote sales conducted through sales outlets, catalogues, or the ~~Internet~~ internet or any other similar electronic means.

~~(14)~~(17) “Stewardship organization” means a nonprofit corporation or nonprofit organization created by a producer or group of producers to implement the Paint Product Stewardship Program required under this subchapter.

§ 6673. PAINT PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

(a) A producer or a stewardship organization representing producers shall submit ~~a~~ an amended plan for the establishment of a Paint Product Stewardship Program to the Secretary for approval ~~by December 1, 2013~~. The plan shall address the following:

(1) Provide a list of participating producers and brands covered by the Program.

(2) Provide specific information on the ~~architectural~~ paint products covered under the Program, such as interior or exterior water- and oil-based coatings, primers, sealers, or wood coatings.

(3) Describe how the Program proposed under the plan will collect, transport, recycle, and process postconsumer paint products for end-of-life management, including recycling, energy recovery, and disposal, using environmentally sound management practices.

(4) Describe the Program and how it will provide for convenient and available statewide collection of postconsumer ~~architectural~~ paint products in urban and rural areas of the State. The producer or stewardship organization shall use the existing household hazardous waste collection infrastructure when selecting collection points for postconsumer ~~architectural~~ paint products. A paint retailer shall be authorized as a paint collection point of postconsumer architectural paint for a Paint Product Stewardship Program if the paint retailer volunteers to act as a ~~paint~~ collection point and complies with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

(5) Provide geographic information modeling to determine the number and distribution of sites for collection of postconsumer architectural paint based on the following criteria:

(A) at least 90 percent of Vermont residents shall have a permanent collection site within a 15-mile radius; and

*(B) one additional permanent site will be established for every 10,000 residents of a municipality and additional sites shall be distributed to provide convenient and reasonably equitable access for residents within each municipality, unless otherwise approved by the Secretary.*

*(6) Establish goals to reduce the generation of postconsumer paint products, to promote the reuse of postconsumer paint products, and for the proper management of postconsumer paint products as practical based on current household hazardous waste program information. The goals may be revised by the producer or stewardship organization based on the information collected for the annual report.*

*(7) Describe how postconsumer paint products will be managed in the most environmentally and economically sound manner, including following the waste-management hierarchy. The management of paint under the Program shall use management activities that promote source reduction, reuse, recycling, energy recovery, and disposal.*

*(8) Describe education and outreach efforts to inform consumers of collection opportunities for postconsumer paint products and to promote the source reduction and recycling of ~~architectural~~ paint products for each of the following: consumers, contractors, and retailers.*

*(b) The producer or stewardship organization shall submit a budget for the Program proposed under subsection (a) of this section, and for any amendment*

*to the plan that would affect the Program's costs. The budget shall include a funding mechanism under which each ~~architectural~~ paint product producer remits to a stewardship organization payment of a paint product stewardship assessment for each ~~container of architectural paint product~~ it sells in this State. Prior to submitting the proposed budget and assessment to the Secretary, the producer or stewardship organization shall provide the budget and assessment to a third-party auditor agreed upon by the Secretary. The third-party auditor shall provide a recommendation as to whether the proposed budget and assessment is cost-effective, reasonable, and limited to covering the cost of the Program. The paint product stewardship assessment shall be added to the cost of all ~~architectural~~ paint products sold in Vermont. To ensure that the funding mechanism is equitable and sustainable, a uniform paint product stewardship assessment shall be established for all ~~architectural~~ paint products sold. The paint stewardship assessment shall be ~~approved by the Secretary and shall be sufficient to recover, but not exceed, the costs of the Paint Stewardship Program~~ the amount established in section 6681 of this title.*

*(c) ~~Beginning no later than July 1, 2014, or three~~ Six months after approval of the plan for a Paint Product Stewardship Program required under subsection (a) of this section, ~~whichever occurs later,~~ a producer of ~~architectural~~ paint products sold at retail or a stewardship organization of*

*which a producer is a member shall implement the approved plan for a Paint Product Stewardship Program.*

*(d) A producer or a stewardship organization of which a producer is a member shall promote a Paint Product Stewardship Program and provide consumers with educational and informational materials describing collection opportunities for postconsumer paint products Statewide and promotion of waste prevention, reuse, and recycling. The educational and informational program shall make consumers aware that the funding for the operation of the Paint Product Stewardship Program has been added to the purchase price of all ~~architectural~~ paint products sold in the State.*

*(e) A plan approved under this section shall provide for collection of postconsumer ~~architectural~~ paint at no cost to the person from whom the ~~architectural~~ paint product is collected. The program plan also shall provide for the payment of municipalities for collection, processing, and end-of-life management of aerosol coating products, coating-related products, and nonindustrial coatings contained in the receptacle in which the product is offered for retail sale. Collection costs include facility costs, equipment costs, labor, supplies, maintenance, events costs, and event contractor costs, including collection event set-up fees, environmental service fees, insurance fees, and shipping containers and materials.*



*(f) When a plan or amendment to an approved plan is submitted under this section, the Secretary shall make the proposed plan or amendment available for public review and comment for at least 30 days.*

*(g) A producer or paint stewardship organization shall submit to the Secretary for review, in the same manner as required under subsection 6675(a) of this title, an amendment to an approved plan when there is:*

*(1) ~~a change to a paint stewardship assessment under the plan;~~*

*(2) ~~an addition to or removal of a category of products covered under the Program; or~~*

*(3)(2) a revision of the product stewardship organization's goals.*

*(h) A plan approved by the Secretary under section 6675 of this title shall have a term not to exceed five years, provided that the producer remains in compliance with the requirements of this chapter and the terms of the approved plan.*

*(i) In addition to the requirements specified in subsection (a) of this section, a stewardship organization shall notify the Secretary in writing within 30 days of after any change to:*

*(1) the number of collection sites for postconsumer ~~architectural~~ paint products identified under this section as part of the plan;*

*(2) the producers identified under this section as part of the plan;*

*(3) the brands of ~~architectural~~ paint products identified under this section as part of the plan; and*

*(4) the processors that manage postconsumer ~~architectural~~ paint products identified under this section as part of the plan.*

*(j) Upon submission of a plan to the Secretary under this section, a producer or a stewardship organization shall pay the fee required by 3 V.S.A. § 2822(j)(31). Thereafter, the producer or stewardship organization shall pay the fee required by 3 V.S.A. § 2822(j)(31) annually ~~by~~ on or before July 1 of each year.*

*§ 6674. RETAILER RESPONSIBILITY*

*(a) A producer or retailer may not sell or offer for sale ~~architectural~~ a paint product to any person in Vermont unless the producer ~~of that architectural paint brand~~ or a stewardship program ~~of which the producer of that architectural paint brand is a member~~ that the producer is a member of is implementing an approved plan for a Paint Product Stewardship Program as required by section 6673 of this title. A retailer complies with the requirements of this section if, on the date the ~~architectural~~ paint product was ordered from the producer or its agent, the producer or paint brand is listed on the Agency of Natural Resources' website as a producer or brand participating in an approved plan for a Paint Product Stewardship Program.*

*(b) At the time of sale to a consumer, a producer, a stewardship organization, or a retailer selling or offering ~~architectural~~ paint products for sale shall provide the consumer with information regarding available management options for postconsumer paint products collected through the Paint Product Stewardship Program or a brand of paint being sold under the Program.*

*§ 6675. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY*

*(a)(1) Within 90 days ~~of~~ after receipt of a plan submitted under section 6673 of this title, the Secretary shall review the plan and make a determination whether or not to approve the plan. The Secretary shall issue a letter of approval for a submitted plan if:*

*(A) the submitted plan provides for the establishment of a Paint Product Stewardship Program that meets the requirements of subsection 6673(a) of this subchapter; and*

*(B) the Secretary determines that the plan:*

*(i) achieves convenient collection for consumers;*

*(ii) educates the public on proper paint product management; and*

*(iii) manages waste paint products in a manner that is environmentally safe and promotes reuse and recycling; ~~and~~*

*(iv) ~~is cost-effective.~~*

*(2) If the Secretary does not approve a submitted plan, the Secretary shall issue to the paint product stewardship organization a letter listing the reasons for the disapproval of the plan. If the Secretary disapproves a plan, a paint product stewardship organization intending to sell or continue to sell ~~architectural~~ paint products in the State shall submit a new plan within 60 days of after receipt of the letter of disapproval.*

*~~(b)(1) The Secretary shall review and approve the stewardship assessment proposed by a producer pursuant to subsection 6673(b) of this title. The Secretary shall only approve the Program budget and any assessment if the applicant has demonstrated that the costs of the Program and any proposed assessment are reasonable and the assessment does not exceed the costs of implementing an approved plan.~~*

*~~(2) If an amended plan is submitted under subsection 6673(g) of this title that proposes to change the cost of the Program or proposes to change the paint stewardship assessment under the plan, the disapproval of any proposed new assessment or the failure of an approved new assessment to cover the total costs of the Program shall not relieve a producer or stewardship organization of its obligation to continue to implement the approved plan under the originally approved assessment.~~*

*(e) Facilities solely collecting paint products for the Paint Product Stewardship Program that would not otherwise be subject to solid waste*

*certification requirements shall not be required to obtain a solid waste certification. Persons solely transporting paint for the Paint Product Stewardship Program that would not otherwise be subject to solid waste hauler permitting requirements shall not be required to obtain a solid waste hauler's permit.*

*§ 6676. ANTICOMPETITIVE CONDUCT*

*(a) A producer or an organization of producers that manages postconsumer paint products, including collection, transport, recycling, and processing of postconsumer paint products, as required by this subchapter may engage in anticompetitive conduct to the extent necessary to implement the plan approved by the Secretary and is immune from liability for the conduct relating to antitrust, restraint of trade, unfair trade practices, and other regulation of trade or commerce.*

*(b) The activity authorized and the immunity afforded under subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to any agreement among producers or paint product stewardship organizations:*

*(1) establishing or affecting the price of paint products, except for the paint stewardship assessment approved under subsection 6675(b) of this title;*

*(2) setting or limiting the output or production of paint products;*

*(3) setting or limiting the volume of paint products sold in a geographic area;*

- (4) restricting the geographic area where paint products will be sold; or*
- (5) restricting the customers to whom paint products will be sold or the volume of paint products that will be sold.*

*§ 6677. PRODUCER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS*

*~~No later than October 15, 2015, and annually thereafter; Annually,~~ a producer or a stewardship program of which the producer is a member shall submit to the Secretary a report describing the Paint Product Stewardship Program that the producer or Stewardship Program is implementing as required by section 6673 of this title. At a minimum, the report shall include:*

*(1) a description of the methods the producer or Stewardship Program used to reduce, reuse, collect, transport, recycle, and process postconsumer paint products statewide in Vermont;*

*(2) the volume and type of postconsumer paint products collected by the producer or Stewardship Program at each collection center in all regions of Vermont;*

*(3) the volume of postconsumer paint products collected by the producer or Stewardship Program in Vermont by method of disposition, including reuse, recycling, energy recovery, and disposal;*

*(4) an independent financial audit of the Paint Product Stewardship Program implemented by the producer or the Stewardship Program;*

*(5) the prior year's actual direct and indirect costs for each Program element and the administrative and overhead costs of administering the approved Program; and*

*(6) samples of the educational materials that the producer or stewardship program provided to consumers of architectural paint.*

*\* \* \**

*§ 6680. UNIVERSAL WASTE DESIGNATION FOR POSTCONSUMER  
PAINT*

*(a) The requirements of Subchapter 9 of the Vermont Hazardous Waste Management Rules, which allow certain categories of hazardous waste to be managed as universal waste, shall apply to postconsumer paint products until the postconsumer paint is discarded, provided that:*

*(1) the postconsumer paint product is collected as a part of a stewardship plan approved under this subchapter; and*

*(2) the collected postconsumer paint product is or includes a paint product that is a hazardous waste as defined and regulated by the Vermont Hazardous Waste Management Rules.*

*(b) When postconsumer paint product is regulated as universal waste under subsection (a) of this section, small and large quantity handlers of the postconsumer paint shall manage the postconsumer paint products in a manner that prevents releases of any universal waste or component of the*

*universal waste to the environment. Postconsumer paint products regulated as universal waste shall, at a minimum, be contained in one or more of the following:*

*(1) a container that remains closed, structurally sound, and compatible with the postconsumer paint products and that lacks evidence of leakage, spillage, or damage that could cause leakage under reasonably foreseeable conditions; or*

*(2) a container that does not meet the requirements of subdivision (1) of this subsection, provided that the unacceptable container is overpacked in a container that meets the requirements of subdivision (1).*

*(c) Containers holding postconsumer paint products that ~~is~~ are regulated as universal waste shall be clearly labeled to clearly identify the contents of the container, such as “Paint-Related Waste,” “Universal Waste Paint,” “Used Paint,” or “Waste Paint.”*

*(d) Unless otherwise provided by statute, the definitions of the Vermont Hazardous Waste Management Rules shall apply to this section.*

§ 6681. PAINT CONSUMER FEES

*(a) The paint product stewardship assessment shall be sufficient to implement and sustain the Paint Product Stewardship Program. If at any time the stewardship assessments established in this section are not sufficient to implement and sustain the Paint Product Stewardship Program, the Paint*



Product Stewardship Program shall propose new stewardship assessments that are sufficient to implement and sustain the Program.

(b) A retailer shall charge an assessment on paint products, based on current material management costs of the Paint Product Stewardship Program, in the following amounts for architectural paint:

<u>(1) Half pint or smaller:</u>	<u>No fee.</u>
<u>(2) Greater than a half pint to one gallon:</u>	<u>\$0.65.</u>
<u>(3) Greater than one gallon to two gallons:</u>	<u>\$1.35.</u>
<u>(4) Greater than two gallons to five gallons:</u>	<u>\$2.45.</u>

*Sec. 15. IMPLEMENTATION; FEE REPORT*

(a) The requirements for the sale of paint products under 10 V.S.A. § 6673 shall apply to architectural paint beginning on July 1, 2013 and all paint products beginning on July 1, 2026.

(b) The requirement under 10 V.S.A. § 6673 for an architectural paint producer to submit a stewardship plan to the Secretary of Natural Resources currently applies to producers of architectural paint as required beginning on July 1, 2013 and shall also apply to producers of paint related products beginning on July 1, 2026.

(c) The requirement under 10 V.S.A. § 6677 that an architectural paint producer annually report to the Secretary of Natural Resources currently applies to producers of architectural paint as required beginning on July 1,

2013 and shall also apply to producers of paint related products beginning on March 1, 2027.

(d) On or before December 15, 2025, the Secretary of Natural Resources shall submit to the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Energy and on Finance and the House Committees on Environment and on Ways and Means a report recommending a paint consumer fee or fees to be charged for paint products that are not architectural paint.

*\* \* \* Renewable Power Portfolio \* \* \**

*Sec. 16. 30 V.S.A. § 8009 is amended to read:*

*§ 8009. BASELOAD RENEWABLE POWER PORTFOLIO  
REQUIREMENT*

*\* \* \**

*(d) On or before November 1, ~~2027~~ 2028, the Commission shall determine, for the period beginning on November 1, ~~2026~~ 2028 and ending on November 1, 2032, the price to be paid to a plant used to satisfy the baseload renewable power portfolio requirement. The Commission shall not be required to make this determination as a contested case under 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. The price shall be the avoided cost of the Vermont composite electric utility system. As used in this subsection, the term “avoided cost” means the incremental cost to retail electricity providers of electric energy or capacity, or both, that, but for the purchase from the plant proposed to satisfy the baseload renewable power*

*portfolio requirement, such providers would obtain from a source using the same generation technology as the proposed plant. For the purposes of this subsection, the term “avoided cost” also includes the Commission’s consideration of each of the following:*

*\* \* \**

*(k) Collocation and efficiency requirements.*

*(1) The owner of the plant used to satisfy the baseload renewable power portfolio requirement shall cause the plant’s overall efficiency to be increased by at least 50 percent relative to the 12-month period preceding July 1, 2022. In achieving this efficiency, the owner shall comply with the requirements of this subsection.*

*(2) On or before ~~July~~ October 1, 2023 2025, the owner of the plant shall submit to the Commission and the Department:*

*(A) A signed contract providing for the construction of a facility at the plant that utilizes the excess thermal heat generated at the plant for a beneficial purpose. As used in this subdivision (A), beneficial purpose may include the displacement of fossil fuel use for the sustainable production of a product or service or more efficient or less costly generation of electricity.*

*(B) A certification by a qualified professional engineer that the construction of the facility shall meet the requirement of subdivision (1) of this subsection (k).*

*(3) On or before October 1, ~~2025~~ 2026, the owner of the plant shall submit to the Commission and the Department a certification that the main components of the facility used to meet the requirement of subdivision (1) of this subsection have been manufactured and that the construction plans for the facility have been completed.*

*(4) If the contract and certification required under subdivision (2) of this subsection are not submitted to the Commission and Department on or before ~~July~~ October 1, ~~2023~~ 2025 or if the certification required under subdivision (3) is not submitted to the Commission and Department on or before October 1, ~~2025~~ 2026, then the obligation under this section for each Vermont retail electricity provider to purchase a pro rata share of the baseload renewable power portfolio requirement shall cease on November 1, ~~2025~~ 2026, and the Commission is not required to conduct the rate determination provided for in subsection (d) of this section.*

*(5) On or before September 1, ~~2026~~ 2027, the Department shall investigate and submit a recommendation to the Commission on whether the plant has achieved the requirement of subdivision (1) of this subsection. If the Department recommends that the plant has not achieved the requirement of subdivision (1) of this subsection, the obligation under this section shall cease on November 1, ~~2026~~ 2027, and the Commission is not required to conduct the rate determination provided for in subsection (d) of this section.*

*(6) After November 1, 2027 2028, the owner of the plant shall report annually to the Department and the Department shall verify the overall efficiency of the plant for the prior 12-month period. If the overall efficiency of the plant falls below the requirement of subdivision (1) of this subsection, the report shall include a plan to return the plant to the required efficiency within one year.*

*(7) If, after implementing the plan in subdivision (6) of this subsection, the owner of the plant does not achieve the efficiency required in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Department shall request that the Commission commence a proceeding to terminate the obligation under this section.*

*\* \* \**

*\* \* \* Effective Dates \* \* \**

*Sec. 17. EFFECTIVE DATES*

*(a) This section and Secs. 7–13 (covered household hazardous products), 14–15 (paint products), and 16 (renewable power portfolio) shall take effect on passage.*

~~*(b) The remainder of this act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, except that Sec. 5 (use value appraisal) shall take effect on January 1, 2026.*~~

*(b) The remainder of this act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.*